Periodic Review Report

prepared by

Muhlenberg College

for

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education

and

the Muhlenberg College Community

June 2011
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the College</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology in Preparation of the PRR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Institutional Changes since the Decennial Accreditation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlights of the PRR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Responses to Self-Study and 2006 Visiting Team Recommendations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3: Institutional Resources</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4: Leadership and Governance</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5: Administration</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7: Institutional Assessment</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 8: Student Admissions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 9: Student Support Services</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 10: Faculty</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 11: Educational Offerings</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 12: General Education</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 13: Related Educational Activities</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Challenges and Opportunities for the Next Five Years</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Institutional and Student Learning Assessment</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the College

Muhlenberg College is an independent liberal arts institution situated on 82 acres in a residential area of west Allentown, Pennsylvania. The main campus is complemented by the 50-acre Graver Arboretum and the 40-acre Raker Biological Field Station and Wildlife Sanctuary. Founded as Allentown Seminary in 1848 by the Lutheran Ministerium, the school was renamed Muhlenberg College in 1867 and remained all-male until 1957. The total Fall 2010 enrollment was 2,225 traditional day students from 33 states and 7 non-U.S. countries. While affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), Muhlenberg is proud of the religious diversity of its student body: 32.3% Jewish, 31% Catholic, 5.8% Protestant other than Lutheran, 6.1% Lutheran, and the remaining students Other or No Affiliation. There are 57% women, 43% men, and 9% students of color. The College also serves a nontraditional population through the Wescoe School. Those students, seeking a degree on a part-time basis, numbered 273 in Fall 2010.

The current mission of the College emerged from extensive discussions with a wide range of constituents during the 2003-04 development of the Strategic Plan, The Talents Entrusted to Our Care. While not deviating from the core values of the College, the statement is fresh, reinforcing that the College seeks to “develop independent critical thinkers” who are “characterized by a zest for reasoned and civil debate.” Our students should be able to express ideas with “clarity and grace” and be “committed to life-long learning, equipped with ethical and civic values, and prepared for lives of leadership and service.” The mission signals “an intellectually rigorous undergraduate education within the context of a supportive, diverse residential community.” The mission supports faculty “passionate about teaching [who] value close relationships with students, and are committed to the pedagogical and intellectual importance of research.” Honoring its Lutheran heritage, the mission acknowledges that the College “welcomes and celebrates a variety of faith traditions.”

Muhlenberg College aims to develop independent critical thinkers who are intellectually agile, characterized by a zest for reasoned and civil debate, committed to understanding the diversity of the human experience, able to express ideas with clarity and grace, committed to life-long learning, equipped with ethical and civic values, and prepared for lives of leadership and service. The College is committed to providing an intellectually rigorous undergraduate education within the context of a supportive, diverse residential community. Our curriculum integrates the traditional liberal arts with selected pre-professional studies. Our faculty are passionate about teaching, value close relationships with students, and are committed to the pedagogical and intellectual importance of research. All members of our community are committed to educating the whole person through experiences within and beyond the classroom. Honoring its historical heritage from the Lutheran Church and its continuing connection with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Muhlenberg encourages, welcomes, and celebrates a variety of faith traditions and spiritual perspectives.
Students explore a rich and varied curriculum that synthesizes experiences inside and outside the classroom, laboratory and studio. Students develop essential skills, intellectual acuity, and civic responsibility in classes that range from introductory courses to advanced seminars and capstone experiences, from performance ensembles to science labs, to conversations with outside specialists through our Center for Ethics or Living Writers programs, and more. Students have numerous opportunities to engage in research, independent study, internships, and study overseas or in Washington, DC. Students may also cross-register or engage in other cooperative ventures through any of the other five colleges and universities in the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC). The College offers 39 majors, 30 minors, and the opportunity to develop a Self-Designed major. Students may graduate with a B.S., A.B., Bachelor’s of Arts and Science (Dual Degree) or Bachelor’s of Self-Directed Inquiry. New majors since the Self Study include Neuroscience, Film Studies, and Finance; new minors include Public Health, African-American Studies, and Creative Writing; the Environmental Studies minor was restructured as Sustainability Studies. Current General Academic Requirements include disciplinary perspectives such as history and philosophy and skills such as writing and foreign language. Students participate in over 100 clubs and organizations. There are 22 varsity sports (11 each for women and men), and many students participate in intramurals and work out in the recently expanded Life Sports Center.

The College has always sought to hire individuals who value the educational mission of the College and who bring expertise, energy, and a strong work ethic to the College. As a small institution, we are all often called upon to serve in many capacities. In Fall 2010 classes were taught by 166 full-time faculty and 91 part-time faculty, many of whom were in areas such as applied music. Total full-time personnel at the College, including faculty, administrators, staff associates, security, and plant operations numbered 485. Total part-time personnel, including coaches and staff associates numbered 245. Muhlenberg has not cut staff or reduced full-time positions to part-time in response to recent economic challenges.

When Peyton R. Helm became Muhlenberg’s eleventh president in 2003, he led the campus in a strategic planning process that resulted in a five-year blueprint entitled, *The Talents Entrusted to Our Care*, approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2004. He has most recently led the College in producing another five-year plan, *Momentum: Muhlenberg’s Strategic Plan 2010-2015*, approved October, 2010. Both plans have been developed through broad consultation and incorporate responsible budget models and annual assessment.

**Methodology in Preparation of the PRR**

In 2009, Kathy Harring and Carol Shiner Wilson, co-chairs of the 2006 Self-Study, attended the MSCHIE Institute on the PRR. Subsequently, they co-chaired a campus PRR committee comprised of twelve faculty and staff and the Executive Assistant to the President, who served as process assistant (names & titles appear at the end of the executive summary). Committee members were from many areas of college life,
including two members of President’s Staff and a faculty member who had served on both Strategic Planning committees (2004 and 2010), and three faculty with expertise in assessment. The Committee carefully reviewed the Self Study, Visiting Team report, Muhlenberg’s response to the report, the Commission’s action letter, and the Handbook for Periodic Review Reports.

Subsequently, data were collected on the past five years in all areas relevant to the components of the PRR. Two areas of organization of the PRR were addressed early on. First, while the Self Study had been organized into chapters that sometimes clustered standards (e.g., the library was in Resources, Student Services, and Curriculum), the Visiting Team report was organized by standards. The PRR reflects the latter structure. More importantly, perhaps, was that the Muhlenberg PRR Committee had to interpret Visiting Committee language that at times suggested rather than clearly recommended (e.g., “thought might be given to” [Visiting Team Report, 21]). The Committee erred on the side of inclusiveness and treated suggestions as recommendations. It is important to note that the Visiting Team found Muhlenberg in compliance with all standards reviewed.

Structurally, all Standard sections in this report begin with a narrative that includes all recommendations from the Self Study and those from the Visiting Team report in bold. Along the way, the Committee engaged in peer editing of draft documents. A draft of the PRR document was posted, password-protected on the College website for internal constituents early in the Spring 2011 semester, and Co-chairs Harring and Shiner Wilson presented the highlights for discussion and feedback at key sites to faculty, students, administrators, Board of Trustees, support staff, and plant operations. Notices and articles were also placed in student and other College publications.

Major Institutional Changes Since the Decennial Accreditation

Five milestones of particular note have been reached since the 2006 Self-Study. First, the faculty conducted an extensive review of the general education curriculum. While the proposal that emerged was defeated, the College is moving ahead to build on the strengths of the current curriculum and integrate some aspects of the proposal. In 2006, the College committed to an administrative position, Associate Dean of Institutional Assessment, and that individual has embarked upon coordination and development of assessment in both faculty and administrative structures. In addition, the College completed a multi-year capital campaign by raising $110.4 million, exceeding the $105 million goal. Moreover, the physical plant has been reconfigured: an addition to Seegers Union, which includes student affairs offices and a handsome dining hall; a Rehearsal House, with office and performance space for music and theatre; residence halls with attractive suite living; and renovations and an addition to the Hillel House that incorporated office and laboratory space for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Finally, the number of applications and enrollments for incoming classes continues to be strong, despite the economy.
Standard 2: While reviews of the budget model and priorities for the 2004 strategic plan have taken place annually, a major review took place in 2008. Budget adjustments have been made to assure that we can continue to afford the implementation of the plan.

Standard 3: Technological support for faculty, staff and students has been enhanced by the hiring of a second media technician and a system integration position. Bandwidth and wireless capacity have been expanded, and the College Committee on Information Technology (CCIT) recommended additional staff for academic computing and a clear structure for gathering input to aid in information technology decisions.

Standard 4: The Board of Trustees revisited the language on the election of the Treasurer and the President’s status as a non-voting member, choosing to retain the status quo. Muhlenberg’s consultative approach to campus affairs, including budget development and facilities planning remains strong. The Budget Advisory Committee, for example, includes faculty and administrators, and faculty, students, staff, and trustees were involved both in planning the new Seegers Union space and selecting a food service vendor. Students, faculty, staff, and trustees were involved in creating the new strategic plan. Opportunities allowed input from faculty, students, staff, alumni, parents and others at several points of the planning process. As for academic divisions, the College has found that interdisciplinary and inter-divisional structures are productive with projects such as an analysis and recommendation of languages to be offered by 2015.

Standard 5: The Provost oversees and evaluates administrative work done by faculty, including academic department chairs and directors of centers such as Ethics and Faculty Center for Teaching.

Standard 7: The position of Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment was established in 2006 to provide the coordination, education and support for assessment activities vital to the College. Dean Harring has assisted academic departments in developing mission statements and student learning goals. She has also worked closely with two faculty task forces on curriculum renewal, including the articulation of learning goals, and has conducted several college-wide assessment projects, including the three-year Teagle Foundation project to assess intentional learning in capstone courses and in independent study/research. She has, moreover, worked with administrative units, including the division of Student Affairs, in developing mission statements, goals, and approaches to measuring outcomes. Whether using external instruments such as HEDS and NSSE, or internal direct and indirect measures, the College has established a solid foundation for institutional assessment and is using data at all levels to inform planning and decision-making.

Standard 8: The Office of Admission and Financial Aid is now using NSSE, BSSE, and HEDS data as well as the ASQ (Admitted Student Questionnaire) results. Admissions
now pursues a more systematic analysis of students from historically underrepresented populations. The Early Admission program has been reviewed and will be continued, even if such admissions exceed 49%. Ever mindful of marketing, Admissions has updated its print and web presence and has drawn on the New Media position in Public Relations to be visible on Twitter and Facebook.

Standard 9: Student Affairs, in partnership with Institutional Assessment, has articulated a division mission linked to student outcomes. National instruments have been used in the Office of Leadership and Greek Life and the Office of Residential Life. The Multicultural Center provides a venue to discuss, plan, and carry out programs to increase appreciation of difference and diversity. The Career Center, seeking to increase the participation of males in their services, has partnered with Athletics department and the Fitness and Wellness instructors. Online registration was successfully implemented in April 2008, and work has begun to develop an online Degree Audit program. Health Services has developed an informative website, including information on H1N1, and Counseling Services has developed a client tracking system and implemented a satisfaction survey. The Office of Leadership and Greek Life employs instruments including a 2006 comprehensive instrument from the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity. The Office of Student Activities encourages and supports collaboration among students, academic departments, and administrative groups, resulting in funding for programs such as the Center for Ethics’ “Congress to Campus” program. The Office of Residential Services, working with Admissions and the Dean of Students, reviewed the practice of housing first-year students together on the west side of campus, concluding it made sense for the psychosocial development of the students to continue the practice. Intentional about RA training throughout the academic year, the office assesses each workshop and makes adjustments accordingly to have more effective presentations on topics including ethical decision-making and conflict resolution. The Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) instrument, administered every three years, covers satisfaction areas as well as climate, community, diverse interactions, learning outcomes, and ten Muhlenberg-specific questions.

Standard 10: Workload concerns for full-time faculty have resulted in two actions: additional secretarial support in seven programs and messages by College leadership that junior faculty should focus on teaching and scholarship during their pre-tenure years. Handbook language was adopted to clarify five areas of scholarship and the expectation for evidence of continual and effective engagement in professional activity. The Faculty Personnel and Policies Committee (FPPC) has been asked to consider ways to distribute committee service more broadly. Advising loads vary with majors and minors, and attention is paid to helping advisors to first-year seminar groups balance that advising with major and minor advising. The College’s compensation goal is to position Muhlenberg faculty salaries in the top 20 percent of the Carnegie IIB Group. For nontenurable faculty, the College has benchmarked area adjunct compensation, and the Provost consults with department chairs about salary adjustments and professional development funding for adjuncts on a case-by-case basis.
Standard 11: The faculty passed a set of student learning outcomes for the general education curriculum December, 2009. These goals provide key points for ongoing discussions for building a strong curriculum at the College.

Standard 12: The establishment of the Office of Institutional Assessment has enabled the College to better coordinate, communicate, and support assessment activities across the campus. Since 2006, the College has addressed the need for a capstone experience for all students and an intentional focus on the development of information literacy skills in several ways. Department chairs have become more intentional in identifying experiences in the major as culminating or capstone experiences, and capstones are identified as such in the college catalogue. The Trexler Library expanded its information literacy activities in support of the curriculum. Students took the HEDS Research Practices Survey to compare student perceptions of and actual skills in information literacy. In 2007, the Academic Policy Committee authorized a curriculum-revision task force (Task Force I) to evaluate the current curriculum, develop student learning goals for general education, and draft a proposal for new general education requirements. That work included a review of assessment data and multiple focus groups and discussions. The goals informed the working model broadly endorsed by the faculty in May 2010. Task Force II worked thereafter to bring a model to the faculty in December 2010. While the proposal was not approved, the College has learned from the process and will incorporate systematic institutional assessment of outcomes in the existing curriculum.

Standard 13: The College has added collaborative summer grants for students to assist faculty in their research to the existing grants for student-initiated research. Funding for students to present or perform has doubled. Global Education has added short-term study abroad to countries including China, Bangladesh, and Turkey. Students’ regular financial aid applies to these courses. Wescoe School students complete evaluations for every course. Most academic departments have contact with or observe adjunct faculty teaching, and several Wescoe faculty teach in the day program. The Wescoe School Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee, which includes daytime faculty, meets monthly to review curricular changes, student petitions, and special topics courses. The centennial year of adult education at Muhlenberg was marked by a distinguished speaker, a gala, outreach to alumni, and fundraising for a scholarship named for a beloved economics professor and former dean of the Wescoe School.

Standard 14: Two projects employing direct tools to evaluate student learning across the curriculum include: work grounded in the Teagle Foundation grant and the HEDS Research Practices survey. The results of the former included wide sharing of rubrics developed to assess intentional learning across the curriculum and the student experience in capstone courses and student-faculty research. The Research Practices survey was administered in 2009 to all first-years and seniors, tapping both perceptions of information literacy skills and actual knowledge. Faculty learning communities developed direct measures of outcomes in service learning courses and brain-based pedagogy.
Chapter 2

The challenges facing Muhlenberg over the next several years are: the weak economy, an increased need for financial aid, changing student demographics, competition from less expensive alternatives to private college tuition, and pressure on services from an increased number of students with special needs. Families, losing income through unemployment and underemployment, seek and receive larger financial aid packages. The sticker price of private higher education may compel many students to seek lower cost alternatives. Lower corporate and alumni giving, coupled with higher utility and health care costs will also be challenging. With a reputation for serving special needs students, the College attracts more such students who will draw on already strained resources.

At the same time, the College has identified opportunities to strengthen the educational experience, including curricular reform, increased diversity, additional capstone experiences, and a greater emphasis on experiential learning. The College will continue to identify, recruit, and support students of historically underrepresented groups through efforts such as relationships with selected urban high schools and NSF grants.

Chapter 3

Full-time, traditional day enrollments have grown from 2,147 in Fall 2005 to 2,225 in Fall 2010 an increase of 78 students (+3.6%). The target enrollment for budget purposes is intended to be stable at 2,180, and entering classes the past five years have averaged 589. Religious diversity remains strong, and progress has been made in ethnic diversity. An uptick occurred in the most recent admissions in Fall 2010: 4,568 applications for an entering class of 604, with an increase in multicultural students, combined Verbal/Math SAT mean, and students in the top ten percent of their high school classes. The tuition discount rate topped at 33.5%.

The operating budget has grown annually, on average, 5.8% from fiscal year 2006-07 through 2010-11. A balanced budget has been maintained for fifty-five consecutive years. The College budget relies heavily on student charges, most recently 85.6% of the revenue. Financial Aid has increased, operating budgets have decreased, and salaries and benefits have increased in cost over the past five years. As of December 31, 2010, the endowment sat at $126.5 million. Unrestricted Assets and Total Net Assets have grown. The College has strong credit ratings: Standard and Poor’s assigns an A+ to the College’s outstanding bond issues; and Moody's Investor Services maintains an A2 for debt. Funds from two bond issues were used for eight renovation or new construction projects. In 2008 the College issued new debt to retire the two bond issues. The new strategic plan does not call for any additional debt.

Planning and budgeting are carefully linked and reviewed throughout the year. A multi-year budget model with a number of assumptions is used in the planning process to match budget funds with strategic initiatives, and the College’s performance against the model is measured annually so that corrective action may be taken if necessary. The
model assumes a steady enrollment. The Budget Advisory Committee makes recommendations on the macro-budget (e.g., tuition, salaries) to the President; he and the Chief Business Officer and Treasurer then propose a budget to the Finance and Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees for ultimate approval by the full Board.

Chapter 4

Building on the strong foundation outlined in our 2006 Self Study and affirmed in the Visiting Team’s Report, Muhlenberg has continued to broaden and deepen our efforts to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning across the College. With a dedicated administrative structure (i.e., Associate Dean of Institutional Assessment, Director of Institutional Research) to provide support for and coordination of assessment activities, academic and administrative departments have developed mission statements and goals for their programs and have taken ownership of assessing these objectives.

Since its founding in 2004, the Board of Observers provides regularly scheduled visiting committees to perform external reviews of all academic and administrative offices. All visiting committee recommendations and departmental responses are reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Most academic departments have conducted some type of indirect and direct assessment of student learning. Administrative departments complete annual assessments of goals, and offices under the Dean of the College for Academic Life and the Dean of Students have increased the integration of assessment over the past five years. Admissions continues to utilize the Admitted Student Questionnaire and evaluations of the SAT-optional program. The Office of Global Education uses student surveys and interviews to evaluate study abroad experiences and the quality of affiliated programs.

*Indirect Assessment of Student Learning.* At the institutional level, Muhlenberg administers a variety of standardized instruments (NSSE, HEDS Senior Survey, HERI, CIRP, BSSE, AICUP First-year, and HEDS Research Practices) to assess student learning, including student expectations about education and student life, perceptions of their current educational experience, and evaluation of specific programs and services. In the past five years, with a coordinated focus and institutional structure (Office of Institutional Assessment) for student learning assessment, the College has made significant progress in developing tools and methods to assess student learning and to align findings with curricular and co-curricular revision. The Task Force on Curricular Design included in its work: focus groups with faculty, administrators, and students; surveys; a curriculum retreat; survey results (e.g., NSSE, HEDS); transcripts; findings from the Teagle Assessment Project; data showing current departmental offerings; and benchmark information on general education programs at peer institutions. The College has also conducted indirect assessments of specific curricular or co-curricular programs such as the FY seminar program, Center for Ethics, and Academic Behavior Code.
Direct Assessment of Student Learning. The three-year Teagle Foundation Value-Added Assessment Project in collaboration with four peer institutions focused on the indirect and direct assessment of student learning in programs with intensive faculty-student interaction, including capstone courses and research. In addition, Muhlenberg participated in the AAC&U Bringing Theory to Practice Leadership Coalition, wherein twelve faculty members worked together in a learning community to deepen their understanding of the application of neuroscience and cognitive psychology to classroom pedagogy. A common assessment tool to evaluate student learning emerged from this collaboration. The Mellon Sports Project and a comprehensive retention study have allowed the College to track learning of two subgroups: athletes and students who leave the College without graduating. With a dedicated administrative structure and practices to support departments and programs, assessment work has been integrated within and across the College. Clearly, the College has created a culture of assessment and put in place the structures and resources to support and sustain the work.

Members of the Muhlenberg College Committee on the PRR (PPG denotes membership on the President’s Planning Group for strategic planning)

Bruce Anderson, Ph.D., Chair, Chemistry Department (PPG)
James Bloom, Ph.D., Professor of English
Kent Dyer, CPA, Chief Business Officer and Treasurer (PPG)
Laura Edelman, Ph.D., Chair, Psychology Department
Jane Flood, Ph.D., Chair, Physics Department
Karen Green, M.Div., Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs (PPG)
Kathleen Harring, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment, Co-chair, PRR
Connie Harris, B.A., Vice President, Development and Alumni Relations (PPG)
Chris Hooker-Haring, B.A., Dean of Admission and Financial Aid (PPG)
Jennifer Jarson, M.L.I.S., Information Literacy and Assessment Librarian
John Ramsay, Ph.D., Provost (PPG)
Carol Shiner Wilson, Ph.D., Dean of the College for Academic Life, Co-chair, PRR
Ken Butler, B.M., Executive Assistant to the President, Process Assistant to PRR
Chapter 1

Responses to Self-Study and 2006 Visiting Team Recommendations

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Muhlenberg’s strategic plan “The Talents Entrusted to Our Care” was adopted in 2004. Since the plan had not been in existence long enough to collect and interpret evidence of its effectiveness, the Middle States team noted that “By the time of the next Periodic Review Report, the college should have enough experience to evaluate both the process and its results.”

The strategic plan’s budget model was (and is) reviewed annually at the close of each fiscal year by the President, the Treasurer, and the Board of Trustees, and the following fall by the Budget Advisory Committee before the budget planning process starts for the next year. Discussions with each senior officer focus on strategic initiatives in determining funding priorities.

The President re-convened the President’s Planning Group (PPG) for a major strategic plan review, taking place from September 2007 through January 2008. Strategic planning documents (mission statement, values statement, goals, and planning principles) were reviewed not only by the PPG but also by various constituents. Also part of this review was a reexamination of each of the strategic plan budget model assumptions. The out years of the model were updated to account for changes in assumptions. These updates informed decisions about which initiatives could continue and which new ones would be implemented. This review led to the recommendation to implement the second phase of the planned Seegers Union expansion, to renovate the TKE fraternity house into a Rehearsal House for Music and Theatre, and to renovate and add space to the Hillel House that incorporated office and laboratory facilities for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

The President’s Staff and the PPG conducted a detailed review of the costs of the proposed strategic initiatives within the context of a ten-year budget model. Anticipated revenues and fund raising results were weighed against possible costs. This process required difficult choices, but was made easier by the community’s earlier agreement on strategic planning principles, strategic goals, and our institutional mission and values, all of which guided the priority-setting process.

As in the 2010 Strategic Plan, the 2004 plan was strategic, not operational. It deliberately sketched broad strategies, suggested institutional directions, and set financial priorities. At the same time, if it was unclear whether a specific initiative was strategic or tactical, the plan erred on the side of inclusiveness. The plan did not override the prerogatives of the faculty, which, through its committees, considered and amended or approved some of the initiatives suggested in the plan. Neither did the plan overlook the important continuing role of student leaders and members of the staff in the process of implementation. Operational plans for the implementation of other initiatives in the plan were the responsibility of various College committees, faculty, and staff.
Regular assessment of Muhlenberg’s progress is essential to the success of any Strategic Plan and, ultimately, to the continued success of the College. The assessment of the 2004 strategic plan took several forms:

1. The goals themselves were assessed annually. As the future reveals itself we must assure ourselves that we have chosen the right goals, and that changing circumstances have not altered our commitment to these goals, the priority we assign them, or our ability to achieve them. While goals that have been articulated through careful deliberation and consultation should not be changed capriciously or autocratically, we must remain open and flexible. A good strategic plan is never carved in stone.

2. The assumptions on which our financial model is based were assessed annually, and budget adjustments were made to assure that we can continue to afford the implementation of the plan.

3. We monitored annually the progress of the various faculty committees and offices of the College in developing and implementing operational plans to bring strategic initiatives to reality. Progress towards goals was reported each year on the strategic planning website.

4. The effectiveness of strategic initiatives, once implemented, in achieving our strategic goals was also reviewed annually. This was achieved, at least in part, by the development of agreed upon management metrics that measure Muhlenberg’s academic and fiscal progress.

Refer to [http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/stratplanning/update.pdf](http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/stratplanning/update.pdf) to review the annual updates of the 2004 Strategic Plan.

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

The 2006 Self-Study outlined two recommendations: 1) that the college should focus greater attention on assessing needs of current employees in areas such as compensation, workload, and supervision in order to better align responses with those needs; and 2) that Muhlenberg needs to identify and prioritize optional technological support (hardware, software, staff) for faculty, staff, and students. The Middle States Visiting Team report echoed the concern about assessments of employee compensation, workload, and supervision and also noted that the staffing in the area of information technology may be insufficient. The team’s suggestion that we implement a process to update the strategic initiatives and the costs of those initiatives to ensure alignment of resources and strategic priorities is addressed in the response to Standard 2 on page 10.

*Salary and Workload.* Salary equity across all employee groups is reviewed annually. Salary pools include funds for equity adjustments to address concerns. Moreover,
compensation is also reviewed against market surveys to ensure appropriate external competitiveness per the Compensation Philosophy adopted by the Board of Trustees (see Appendix 1.1). Workload issues among secretarial staff supporting Political Science, Global Education, History, Multicultural Affairs, Polling Institute, and Accounting, Business and Economics (ABE) were discussed and analyzed. In response we have increased the support staff hours assigned to the Global Education position, formalized the secretarial support for Multicultural Affairs, and reallocated hours among the ABE, History and Political Science/Polling Center staff associates. We have not had workload issues brought to the HR Office recently from any of these academic departments.

Technology. Technological support for faculty, staff, and students has been a priority for the College. A network position was added in FY 2006 as called for by the Strategic Plan. Budget reallocation enabled us to hire a second media technician. A system integration position was added in July 2008 as a result of recommendations from the Board of Observers review and an independent internal control and system review. Improvements from this addition have already saved many hours of staff time and resulted in more efficient operations. This person has created a daily update from the student information system to the alumni and development system and to the IDWorks (student card) system and has also created a daily update from the payroll system to the same two systems.

We continue to monitor the adequacy of support for instructional technology as more rooms are equipped with Tech Walls and the faculty expands its use of technology. Currently we have one staff member deployed in this area. The level of staffing in the Office of Information Technology still remains a concern. Addressing concerns about academic computing, the 2010 Strategic Plan has budgeted for an additional position in instructional technology. The position description for that line is being drafted and the search will start as soon as possible.

To leverage resources the College joined with other LVAIC institutions to purchase additional bandwidth capabilities at a lower cost; this has been helpful in meeting the needs of faculty, students, and staff. However, we continue to review the level of bandwidth needed as we add new computing products.

The College Committee on Information Technology (CCIT) has been involved in strategic planning for campus information technology for over a year. The CCIT consists of three faculty members, the Provost, the Chief Business Officer and Treasurer, the Vice President of Public Relations, the Director of the Office of Information Technology, the Director of the Trexler Library, the Registrar, and two students. Several strategic initiatives were developed and presented to the President’s Planning Group as part of the 2009-2010 Strategic Planning Process. CCIT recommended additional staff support for academic computing and a clearer structure for gathering input from campus constituencies to aid in information technology decisions. This structure will enable CCIT to gather and prioritize data in order to advise the President and senior staff on campus-wide information technology issues. A separate strategic initiative was
presented by the Office for Information Technology for an additional staff member to support the campus network. As noted above, benchmarking showed academic computing and network infrastructure as two areas where our personnel numbers do not match well with peer institutions.

Strategic planning has been discussed at many CCIT meetings. Outlined below is a structure that allows for more input and gathering of data to assist better decision making. Four sub-committees (Infrastructure, Administrative, Academic, and Student), each having CCIT representation, will be responsible for gathering input, benchmarking and researching best practices. This information will flow up to CCIT who will then discuss and prioritize technology issues in order to provide advice to the President, PPG, and senior staff.

A key task for this administrative structure will be to analyze the use and deployment of technology at our peer institutions, uncover best practices, determine areas to improve, and set priorities to ensure Muhlenberg College's program is competitive and innovative.

A second recommendation from CCIT to PPG is expansion of wireless capability on campus with an emphasis on academic buildings and spaces. Student focus groups conducted in November 2008 by the Assessment Office revealed that students viewed the expansion of wireless access as the most pressing technological need on campus (see Appendix 1.2). Wireless coverage has been greatly expanded in recent months and will include 100% of the campus by the start of Fall 2011.

**Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

The Middles States Visiting Team outlined two issues involving leadership and college governance: 1) that the Board might want to revisit language on the election of the Treasurer by the Board of Trustees and the President’s status as a non-voting Trustee, and 2) that the College “assess ways in which faculty and other members of the Muhlenberg community are invited into the planning and decision-making processes in areas such as budgeting and facilities planning.” The Team Report also suggested that “stronger divisional ties may help the institution adjust the future allocation of scarce resources by identifying mutual needs that can be supported at divisional rather than departmental levels.” The 2006 Self-Study noted that “Given the heavy faculty and staff workloads, the College needs to explore ways that governance responsibilities of all constituents can be shared equitably and carried out in an efficient and transparent manner.”

*Board Language*. In response to concerns about language in Board documents, the Board and President discussed these issues and chose to retain the status quo in both areas.
Shared Governance. Muhlenberg’s consultative approach to budget development was endorsed by the Visiting Team in its 2006 evaluation of Standard 3. We also believe that faculty, student, staff, and trustee engagement in facilities planning is and continues to be regular and extensive.

This involvement has continued during the past two years through the processes for architect selection and project design for Seegers phase 2, the dining service vendor selection process, and the current 2010 strategic planning review. Students, faculty, and staff representatives were elected or appointed to these groups, as appropriate. Campus forums and e-mail bulletins inviting response and discussion were offered as part of the strategic plan review.

Divisional Structure. In response to the Middle State Team’s suggestion that we strengthen divisional structure, the Faculty Personnel and Policies Committee (FPPC) revisited the concept of “Division Chairs” originally raised by the President in 2003 (a conversation that resulted in the formation, with advice from the Academic Policy Committee (APC) and FPPC, of the President’s and Provost’s Advisory Council (PPAC)). However, there was little support for this idea, given that many faculty worry that a stronger divisional structure may impede the development of interdisciplinary connections. In the absence of strong divisional structures, then Provost Hass commissioned inter-departmental and inter-divisional working groups to develop key planning proposals. Recent examples include a multi-disciplinary proposal for a new digital production lab and Languages 2015, an interdisciplinary task force charged with generating recommendations for the future of language offerings at Muhlenberg. More recently, current Provost John Ramsay asked department chairs to suggest interdisciplinary groupings of departments that share common interests and resource needs for purposes of seeking external funding to support new initiatives.

Standard 5: Administration

The Middle States Visiting Team expressed concern 1) that “Information Technology needs to be adequately staffed” and 2) that faculty performance of administrative functions should be adequately coordinated and systematically evaluated. In addition, the 2006 Self-Study articulated the need for the development of clear and standard procedures for evaluating department heads in their role as head of the department and as faculty.

Technology Staffing. As noted above, staffing has been added to the Office of Information Technology. We address this issue on in response to Standard 3.

Faculty Administrative Evaluation. The Provost oversees the work of faculty who perform administrative functions and makes use of the Human Resource Office Management Appraisal form to evaluate the administrative functions of those who report to him. Annual evaluations are done for each academic department chair and center director (e.g., Center for Ethics, Faculty Center for Teaching) who complete self-assessments of their leadership and management achievements and challenges and goals for the next academic year.
Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

The Visiting Team suggested that “the new associate dean for assessment should develop a process of consultation in developing the questions and data gathering that are components of a broad-based institutional written plan of assessment and process.” The Self-Study challenged the College to “develop a comprehensive plan that integrates direct and indirect measures of student outcomes and provides for opportunities to better communicate assessment results to the college community.” Moreover, the report recommended the addition of a central office or Director of Assessment to provide “greater coordination, education, and support for assessment activities at all levels (institution, program, and course).”

The Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment position was established in 2006 in large part to carry out these functions (see http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/ir/ for a link to the Institutional Research/Assessment website). In the past four years the Associate Dean consulted with academic departments, administrative units, and faculty committees across the institution to provide support and guidance for the articulation of goals and the development of assessment plans to evaluate outcomes. Workshops have provided opportunities to showcase best practices in the assessment of student learning, as well as to encourage the sharing of ideas and resources. Assessment findings (e.g., from the Teagle Project, NSSE results, HEDS Research Practices survey, the Mellon Sports Project) are routinely presented to President's Staff, Department Chairs, relevant faculty committees, Trustees, and administrative offices (e.g., Admissions, Development). Moreover, NSSE results have played a central role in driving current strategic planning initiatives.

With the support of the Associate Dean, academic departments have developed well articulated mission statements and student learning goals. Most have completed indirect and/or direct assessments of student learning. The College has also conducted several college-wide assessment projects, including the three year Teagle Foundation project to assess intentional learning in capstone courses (see Appendix 1.3 for the final report) and in independent study/research experiences, surveys of students and faculty on learning goals in the First Year seminars, and the HEDS Research Practices Survey to assess freshmen and senior research and information literacy skills (see Appendix 1.4).

The Associate Dean has worked with the Student Affairs division to develop a mission statement and student learning goals. Individual administrative departments have conducted surveys to assess student perceptions of residence life, career services, academic support, and international programs. We routinely assess students' experiences with June Advising and the First Year Orientation program. Results from these assessments have informed program revisions. The Development Office has developed a three year strategic plan integrating measurable outcomes and assessment into all areas of their work.
In December 2009 the faculty approved learning goals for the general education curriculum. The Curriculum Task Force I developed a working model of a revised general education curriculum which was refined by Task Force II. Faculty debated the strengths and weaknesses of this model. While there was support for elements of the proposal, the model did not pass in the December 2010 on-line faculty vote (see Appendix 1.5 for the Curriculum Review Timeline). The Academic Policy Committee plans to survey faculty in order to determine the future direction of the curriculum reform.

At the same time, the Writing Program Committee is developing methods to assess student writing across the curriculum. The College also has a strategic initiative to pilot ePortfolios in select academic departments. In addition, the Provost has provided resources to departments to develop capstone experiences if the program does not currently offer one. The Associate Dean will be working with departments to develop embedded assessments for capstones that can provide evidence of institutional learning outcomes (e.g., writing, oral communication, information literacy). When the faculty approve a new general education curriculum, implementation will include the integration of indirect and direct assessment of student learning goals and a long-term plan for assessing general education outcomes. Muhlenberg has established a solid foundation for institutional assessment and is using assessment data at all levels of the college to inform planning and decision-making. A deeper description and analysis of this work can be found in the Assessment section of this report (see page 45).

**Standard 8: Student Admissions**

There are two areas addressed by the Visiting Committee and the Self-Study: data collection and analysis, and web and print presence.

In the first, the Visiting Committee noted that the Admissions Office should “participate in the development of a more systematic data-gathering and analysis function.” The Self-Study noted that there should be “more systematic data gathering, tracking, analysis and evaluation of all students and selected subpopulations (e.g., SAT optional applications, ED students, minority students) needs to be done. An Office of Institutional Assessment or Director of Assessment would be needed to provide methodological and statistical support in order to interpret data and establish a continuous feedback loop to help us understand and respond effectively to this assessment information.” Moreover, the Self Study noted that, “consistent with current ‘best practice’ policies for admissions operations across the country, the College should limit the percentage of the entering class admitted under Early Decision to no more than 49% of the class.”

In the second, the Visiting Committee noted that Muhlenberg should continuously “update the College’s web site and printed publications to continue to present an
accurate and welcoming depiction of the College to prospective students and their families.” The Self-Study found that Admissions should “regularly monitor its website to insure that ethnic and other kinds of diversity are reflected in photographs, social activities, area attractions, etc. Further, Admissions should consider the development of a Multicultural Page as an addition to the Admissions website in order to highlight opportunities and attractions for multicultural students.” Finally, the Self-Study noted that “[more] attention needs to be paid to regularly updating photographs in Admissions publications to insure that the campus landscape, as well as faculty, staff and students are portrayed in an up-to-date way.”

Data Collection and Analysis. The College’s Strategic Planning process, which is updated regularly, has resulted in a more routine and systematic gathering and analysis of data from all parts of the college community, including Admissions. The process involves analysis of a wide range of data, benchmarking the College’s efforts and results against top admissions overlap institutions. In addition to these data, we review ASQ (Admitted Student Questionnaire), NSSE, BSSE and HEDS results. All of these data are considered as part of our effort to continually improve Muhlenberg’s “educational product,” as well as the College’s marketing.

The creation of an Office of Institutional Assessment has aided and promoted the gathering and assessment of data. It has allowed the College, for example, to participate in the Mellon College Sports Project and to initiate an internal attrition study to track reasons for leaving Muhlenberg (see Appendix 1.6 for the report). While the College enjoys an enviable 92-93% freshman-to-sophomore retention rate and a 79-81% four-year graduation rate, as the demographic climate becomes even more challenging for high cost private higher education, knowing why some students choose to leave us (and what we might be able to do about it) becomes even more important.

There is always more that can be done in tracking and assessing data. In general, Muhlenberg’s metrics on freshman-to-sophomore retention and four-year graduation suggest that the students we accept are a good match for the College. At the same time, our ongoing strategic planning and assessment efforts will no doubt provide additional information to further inform recruitment and retention efforts.

Admissions has begun working with the Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment and the Director of Institutional Research and Records to institute processes that will allow for more systematic tracking and analysis of subpopulations. This effort has begun with an updated analysis of our SAT-optional program, but will move to other populations as well. An in-depth look at Early Decision vs. Regular Decision populations was done as a part of our last Middle States Review Process. The College has instituted a Jump Start summer bridge program to assist multicultural students and others from historically underrepresented groups identified in the admissions process to adjust more successfully and smoothly to the Muhlenberg academic program and campus culture. The second cohort of Jump Start students began in the summer of
The Early Decision recommendation in the Self-Study originated with the Admissions staff. In the increasingly challenging economic and demographic climate, College thinking has changed on this topic. In these conditions, it seems prudent to use Early Decision as a way to build a solid base from which to launch into the more volatile Regular Decision part of the admissions cycle. At Muhlenberg, which is dependent on student charges to fund approximately 86% of its budget, securing the class each year is critical. It makes fiscal sense for the College to develop a large and strong Early Decision applicant pool even if it exceeds 49% of the class.

**Website and Print Publications.** The College has made significant strides in addressing the website and print publications suggestions. A year-long project involving all constituencies of the College and the consulting firm Lipman Hearne resulted in a redesigned and updated website. The design firm met with faculty, staff, and students regarding the site, and design suggestions were vetted with senior staff and student focus groups during Summer 2009. The new site was implemented in Fall 2009, and migration of old pages to the new design was ongoing throughout the 2009-2010 academic year.

In addition, the College created a New Media position in Public Relations to provide for more content creation for the new website, and to allow Muhlenberg to take advantage of opportunities through other social media venues such as Facebook and Twitter. Finally, since the redesign of the website, a Web Committee consisting of the Vice President for Public Relations, the Dean of Admission & Financial Aid, the New Media Specialist, and members of OIT has been meeting regularly to ensure that web content is continuously updated (including photos, stories, new pages, departmental sites, etc.). This has resulted in much richer content for the web site, regular creation of new content, and an official College presence on Facebook and Twitter, as well.

The print format Admissions Viewbook also has been redesigned and updated (both photos and content). All Admissions publications have been reviewed to complement the web site design. A review of Admissions publications and design takes place annually in the summer prior to the printing of new materials.

A group of five to six student interns go through the publications each spring and flag photos that appear out-of-date. (While staff review materials, the student perspective is important.) We are also working with the Office of Public Relations to ensure that we have current photos. Finally, we now regularly test new photos and designs for all print and web publications with student focus groups.

The web now includes a robust Multicultural Page developed by the Office of Multicultural Life that captures activities, events, and local opportunities for multicultural students ([http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/campuslife/multicultural/](http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/campuslife/multicultural/)). Whereas the College has included many photographs of multicultural students on the College website in the past year or so, some students have complained that we are depicting an
“unrealistic” image of multicultural diversity at Muhlenberg. It appears that this is an issue where getting it “just right” is very difficult and, in some ways, subject to the eye of the beholder.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The Visiting Team noted that the primary challenge facing the new dean [of students] would be “the development with her staff of a cohesive approach that both provides students with needed services and also fosters the educational and personal growth of every Muhlenberg student.” The Self-Study, on the other hand, focused on individual offices related to student support services, including the following eight areas.

1. Multicultural Life: (a) “The mission and scope of service needs to be determined and clearly articulated,” (b) “[r]elocation of this office to space more heavily trafficked by all students should be considered,” and (c) “the need for better assessment of retention and graduation outcomes of students of color” needs to be addressed.
2. The Office of Career Development and Placement (now the Career Center): (a) “Strategies to increase student participation in the MULES portfolio program need to be determined and implemented” and (b) “[t]he male/female office usage differential should be studied in order to increase male students’ participation in programming.”
3. Registrar: (a) “A process to assess student needs and satisfaction should be implemented” and (b) “[a] plan for implementation of online services, including registration and degree audits, needs to be developed.”
4. Student Health Services: “More direct information about the Health Center and its services should be provided to students, faculty and others through the website.”
5. Counseling Services: “Methods to assess services and determine future directions should be developed.”
6. Leadership and Greek Life: “Appropriate assessment tools in the areas of leadership training and of Greek life need to be identified and implemented.”
7. Office of Student Activities: “The office should continue to identify and implement programming that relates to the academic mission of the College, including collaborations with the Center for Ethics.”
8. Office of Residential Services: (a) “A review of the current segregation of first-year students on the west side of campus should be conducted” and (b) “[c]omprehensive assessment of programming and RA training needs to be instituted.”

As the new dean, Karen Green’s first priority was to identify and assess existing departmental structures within Student Life to determine intersections among various operations and the extent to which they were meeting student needs. Student Life staff concentrated on creating a unit mission statement and developing student learning outcomes. The Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment has partnered with the Division of Student Life to involve staff in systematic assessment as a best practice.
Other partnerships have emerged with the Office of Development, the Multicultural Center, the Faculty Center for Teaching and the Senior Year Experience. The Dean of Students and the Dean of the College for Academic Life meet regularly regarding individual students, policies, and programs. Two Student Affairs staff joined two faculty colleagues in attendance at an AAC&U Co-Curricular Conference in November 2007. Such partnerships bridge the gap between curricular and co-curricular programming and assist in developing strategies for holistic student learning.

(1) *Multicultural Life.* The mission of this office requires the Director, with the support of the Multicultural Center Advisory Board, to provide opportunities for Muhlenberg College constituents and the greater Allentown community to engage in activities that “promote multicultural understanding” (Mission Statement, 2006). Actual physical space for multicultural life emerged as part of the College Strategic Plan, and the Multicultural Center is in an invitingly renovated building whose space reflects the synergy of two programs: two levels are assigned to multicultural life, including a kitchen, living room, laundry, lounge for students, and a seminar room. The upper floor houses the Office of Global Education.

The Multicultural Center provides a venue for students, staff, faculty, and community members to gather together to share, discuss, plan, and carry out programs to increase awareness and appreciation of “difference” and diversity. Examples of the programming offered through the Center include student organizational meetings (e.g., Black Student Association, Asian and International Student Association, Communidad Latina, Gay Student Alliance, Feminist Collective), multicultural Shabbat observance, RA Diversity Training, and LVAIC diversity programs and workshops (see Appendix 1.7 for a more detailed list of programs). The retention of students of color is addressed in Standard 8 on page 17.

(2) *The Career Center (formerly the Office of Career Development and Placement).* The MULES portfolio, originating in this office over a decade before, had not gained institutional support. ePortfolios will be piloted in select academic programs, potentially leading to a broader, more effective application of the portfolio model. As part of the initiative to elicit participation by more males, the Career Center has partnered with the Athletics Department to reach out to student athletes. Since doing so, there has been an increase in male participation in office services from 32% of contacts in 2004-05 to 40% in 2009-10. Career Center professionals are now also giving presentations in the required Fitness and Wellness course, which is expected to lead to more service contacts by students, male and female.

(3) *Registrar.* Student satisfaction in the services provided by this office is assessed in the HEDS survey and through informal contacts and feedback. The 2009 HEDS survey indicates that 90.8% of seniors were generally or very satisfied with services by the office. An in-office assessment was developed in 2006-2007, consisting of a brief three-question survey that visitors to the Office were asked to complete. The data for Spring 2007 indicates a very positive rating of office assistance, with means ranging from 4.72 – 4.79 (on a 5 point scale).
Online registration was successfully implemented in April 2008 for the Fall 2008 semester. Students and faculty provided positive feedback and helpful suggestions for improvement, many of which have been implemented. The Office of the Registrar remains available to help students and/or faculty who are having difficulty with the registration process. Because the numbers of requests for assistance are small, staff are able to provide time-intensive support for those who need it.

In Fall 2010, the Office of the Registrar began work with the developer of CapStone on the design of the Degree Audit system. In addition, staff will begin meeting with department chairs and program directors to define majors, minors, and programs for entry into the system. Muhlenberg’s defined requirements for majors, minors, programs, and the general academic requirements will be entered during Summer and Fall 2011. Testing for Degree Audits will begin Spring 2012 and full implementation is scheduled for Fall 2012.

(4) Health Center. The website of this service provides the Muhlenberg College community with useful information about available health services. Easy to navigate, the site includes main links to information about clinical services (e.g., hours, immunization procedures, and fees), confidentiality, health forms, policies, student health insurance, and the Center’s mission statement. Many of these links connect to further links with more detailed information for students and employees. In June 2009, a special webpage was designed specifically to address H1N1. The goal was to disseminate factual, up-to-date information quickly and accurately, thereby decreasing anxiety and reducing the spread of misinformation about H1N1. The website provided both general H1N1 information and also information specific to Muhlenberg for each population (students, parents, faculty, and staff) such as procedures for reporting flu-like symptoms.

(5) Counseling Services. This office administers a survey to each client at the termination of therapy to evaluate student perceptions of 1) symptom reduction as a result of therapy and 2) overall quality of life as a result of therapy. These outcomes are accomplished through coping skills training, stress management, anger management, life skills training, short term strategic interventions, and other techniques, as necessary. In addition, satisfaction surveys are given to a sample of clients during the semester to assess perceptions of ongoing sessions. On a monthly basis, the Director of Counseling Services tracks data on a variety of services (e.g., the number of sessions, new and ongoing clients, after hour calls, and group sessions). Yearly data are collected on the types of diagnosis/presenting issues, the percent of clients by class year, and the total number of client visits. These data indicate that the number of clients using Counseling Services has been steadily rising. In response to these findings, the College contracted a psychiatrist who is on campus weekly to assist with the monitoring of students who take medications.

(6) Office of Leadership and Greek Life. This office uses both on-going and periodic assessment tools in the area of fraternity and sorority life. In Spring 2006, the office
administered the Greek Student Experience Survey from the Center for the Study of the College Fraternity (CSCF) to all members of the Greek community. The survey is a comprehensive tool covering items from the reason for initial involvement, through alcohol use and the openness of the fraternity to academic pursuits. In the Fall 2006 and Spring 2007, students in Muhlenberg’s Business Leadership classes conducted research on first-year student perceptions of fraternity and sorority life at the College. These assessment activities used both an institutionally developed instrument and a qualitative study using focus groups. Institutionally developed tools to examine the sorority recruitment process and the effectiveness of an anti-hazing education workshop have also been administered. Information for assessment of fraternity and sorority chapters is collected annually via the Annual Review, an internally created document used for accrediting chapters.

In leadership training, periodic assessment tools have been used to examine the efficacy of specific programs. In January 2009, the Office of Student Leadership Programs used feedback from a one-day workshop for new club and organization leaders and additional data from student leaders and club advisors to develop a five-session leadership training program conducted by the Dale Carnegie Organization in Fall 2009. An assessment tool from the Dale Carnegie organization was used in a pre- and post-test format to determine whether students gained new information from the sessions. As the College considers investing time and resources in becoming a Gallup Organization recognized “strengths-based” campus, a pilot program is being undertaken jointly by the Office of Residential Services and the Office of Student Leadership Programs to determine the potential impact of strengths education on students’ goals and attitudes toward the College. The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (1991) and the College Adjustment Test (1990) are scheduled to measure differences between an experimental group given a strengths-based residential learning experience and a control group given a traditional learning experience.

(7) Student Activities. This office, guided by the College’s mission “to educate the whole person through experiences within and beyond the classroom,” encourages and supports collaboration among students, academic departments, and administrative groups. Responsive to the changing needs of the campus community, staff have worked with the Multicultural Center, multicultural student clubs, and faculty to present programming, including an interactive workshop on cross-racial relationships, to encourage discussion and promote awareness and understanding of diverse cultures. Some examples are a reading by poet Carlos Andres Gomez, a performance by the Navajo band “Blackfire,” and a bus trip to the Feast of San Gennaro in New York City for a history class. One example of co-sponsorship with the Center for Ethics is the “Congress to Campus” program that provided an opportunity for students to engage with legislators and apply knowledge gained through course work in Political Science. Expanding the successful model of the Student Initiative Grant (SIG) program for student-initiated events, Student Activities is currently implementing a grant application system for faculty and academic departments for events that will deepen collaboration among students, faculty, and staff to educate the whole person.
Office of Residential Services. This office, Admissions, and the Dean of Students reviewed the practice of housing first-year students together in three residences halls on the west side of campus, concluding that the practice was in the best interest of these students. The discussion covered the philosophy behind the practice, psychosocial development of first-year students, and general concerns. The group concluded that segregated housing of students of similar maturity and limited level of experience at the College fosters a sense of community, enables them to connect easily with classmates in first-year seminars and other introductory courses, and encourages informal interaction among the three halls. RA training, continuously reviewed and modified, includes sessions targeting first-year student transition issues, thereby assisting RAs in their effectiveness with these students. Segregated housing and close attention by RAs trained in developmental issues may contribute to the high first-to-second year retention rates of students.

RA training takes place throughout the academic year and provides both new and experienced RAs with information necessary to successfully fulfill their role on campus. Formats vary (e.g., lectures, hands-on, multi-media), and topics include diversity, communication, ethical decision-making, conflict resolution, and modeling leadership. Formal evaluations take place for training that occurs with the entire staff. RAs are reminded to provide honest feedback to assist with the review of each training cycle, and results are considered in modifying programs. RAs rate sessions that are interactive and specific to how they do their job as highly effective (Mean = 4.5 on a 5-point scale where higher numbers indicate more effect). They continue to rate the team building that occurs during the off-campus retreat as valuable (Mean = 4.6). They are more critical of lecture formatted sessions or those with material they consider “dry” such as review of the manual (Mean = 2.9).

Residential programming is reviewed in a variety of ways. Each fall, residents are given an opportunity to evaluate their RA and programs provided in their building. The office has worked with the Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment to provide both internal and external assessments to residents (see Appendix 1.8 for the results of the Residence Life Satisfaction Survey). In Spring 2009 the office conducted the Resident Survey provided by Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI). The survey, which will be administered every three years, covers satisfaction areas as well as climate, community, diverse interactions, learning outcomes, alcohol, and up to 10 institution-specific questions. RAs will be focusing their programs for entire residence halls based on feedback from the 2009-2010 academic year, thereby building community within the halls and making better use of resources (see Appendix 1.9 for the EBI report).
Standard 10: Faculty

Three themes regarding faculty emerged between the Self-Study and the Visiting Team report: (1) faculty workload, (2) evaluation of non-tenurable faculty and of department chairs, and (3) compensation for full-time and adjunct faculty.

(1) The Visiting Team noted that “it seems that sometimes faculty spend time on tasks that could be more efficiently done by added administrative or secretarial staff.” The Team also observed that some junior faculty believed that “scholarly activity seems to take third place” after committee work and advising. The Visiting Team also noted that the College has “no formulas for measuring workload across the many different kinds of teaching, advising, and student supervision.” The Self-Study indicated that the College “needs to complete a study of actual faculty workload to assess the issue of workload inequity. Equitable standards for advising should be established and course releases and other faculty assignments should be publicized on an annual basis.”

(2) The Self-Study recommended that “clear and standard procedures should be developed for evaluating non-tenurable faculty” and that “clear and standard procedures should be developed for evaluating department heads in their role as head of the department and as faculty.”

(3) The Visiting Team indicated that “adjuncts and lecturers, in particular those who have served well for many years...should certainly be at least symbolically recognized by some salary differential from others who have just begun their contributions.” The Self-Study agreed, noting that a “process needs to be developed to provide pay increases for long-term adjuncts and to recognize outstanding performance in this group of faculty. For full-time faculty, the Self-Study recommended that, “as endowment grows, the College must continue to focus on keeping faculty salaries competitive with our benchmark institutions.”

Faculty Workload. Since the 2006 Self-Study, additional secretarial support directly relieving faculty was provided for the Office of Global Education, Theatre and Dance, Music, Political Science, the Polling Institute, the Center for Ethics, and Phi Beta Kappa.

The Provost has indicated publicly and privately that junior faculty should focus on teaching and scholarship during their pre-tenure years. The topic is also covered through the Faculty Center for Teaching programs for new faculty. The Provost has, in addition, worked closely with department chairs who, in turn, have engaged more effectively with junior faculty in their understanding of the appropriate balance of scholarship and college service. Scholarly activity is strong among junior faculty and includes essays, books with major presses, book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations, and artistic endeavors. The Faculty adopted new and detailed Handbook language in Spring 2010, so that institutional expectations for scholarship are clearer for junior faculty: “evidence that she or he is continually and effectively engaged in professional activity...relevant to his or her discipline... [and in venues
relevant to the discipline] . . . “Five different types of scholarship (application, artistic production, discovery, integration, and teaching) are described with the expected outcome noted (Appendix 1.10 outlines the new Handbook language on scholarship).

The Faculty Personnel and Policies Committee (FPPC) has been asked to consider ways to distribute committee service more fully. FPPC’s workload equity study of several years ago concluded that no action was warranted. Advising loads vary according to the number of students in various majors and minors. With respect to advising first-year students, ordinarily first year seminar instructors also advise the students in their seminar. When a seminar instructor has a particularly heavy major/minor advising load, the Dean of the College typically assigns a different advisor to the group. The College will be redesigning its approach to advising as a result of its recently completed strategic planning process.

**Evaluation of Nontenurable Faculty and Department Chairs.** The evaluation of department chairs is addressed in Standard 5 on page 14. Every semester, students complete course evaluations for all classes, including those taught by adjunct faculty. Results are distributed to the instructor, department chair, and Provost. Many but not all adjuncts have been observed at least once by their department chair. Department chairs have agreed that a pay scale would have to be based on quality of teaching rather than seniority and, in order to be consistent and fair, would need to include extensive classroom observations of adjuncts by department chairs.

**Compensation for Full-time and Adjunct Faculty.** The College does not have a tiered adjunct pay scale but has made a concerted effort to increase rates for all adjuncts over the past four years. Institutionally, the College continues to monitor adjunct pay through annual comparisons among members of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC). While discussions about a tiered system and rewarding long-term adjuncts have taken place, no plan is in effect at this time. Consultation between the Provost and department chairs has yielded the consensus that incentives for long-term adjuncts might include access to professional development opportunities rather than increased pay. Department chairs also agree that eligibility should occur after four years of service to the institution. The Provost currently considers salary adjustments and professional development funding for adjuncts on a case-by-case basis. The following principle is being developed regarding funding for faculty development for adjuncts: the academic department and the Provost would share the cost of approved adjunct expenses for a professional conference travel or other appropriate professional development activity. Under consideration is a separate line for adjunct professional development in the departmental budget.

At the April 16, 2010 faculty meeting, the President reiterated the goal of positioning Muhlenberg faculty salaries in the top 20 percent of the Carnegie IIB Group. While the College has not quite achieved that goal (especially for assistant professors), the institutional commitment is a top priority, despite austere economic times. Average salaries by rank for 2009-2010 with the comparative AAUP figures are below:
2009-2010 Average Salary by Rank

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>MC</th>
<th>AAUP</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<td>$92,650</td>
<td>($562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
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<td>$71,939</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistants</td>
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<td>$59,744</td>
<td>($2,831)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

The Visiting Team noted the importance of articulating “student learning/development outcomes for the entire institution” and also expressed concern that the College had “only one instructional technologist.”

Technology staffing was addressed on page 12 of this report in response to the Visiting Team and Self-Study recommendations relevant to Standard 3.

As noted on page 16 of this report, the faculty passed a set of general education goals in December 2009 (see Appendix 1.11) which informed the general education proposal voted on in December 2010. Given the failed vote on the proposal, the institution plans to map those goals to evaluate alignment with the current curriculum.

Standard 12: General Education

The Visiting Team addressed three issues related to general education: 1) that we pay attention to the need for a senior capstone experience, 2) that the faculty need to evaluate how information literacy, oral expression, and technological competence are addressed in the curriculum, and 3) that Academic Policy Committee (APC) use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the current Skills and Perspectives requirements. These same concerns were highlighted in the Self Study with the added recommendation that “the College should develop a mechanism for pooling and sharing assessment resources” which includes coordination of practices and results across the institution and support for programs “in the development of assessment plans and analysis of outcomes.”

The establishment of the Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment position was in direct response to the need for better coordination, communication, and support for institutional assessment activities (see page 45 for more detailed information on this work).

Since 2006 the College has addressed the need for a capstone experience for all students and an intentional focus on the development of information literacy skills in several ways. Muhlenberg’s project as part of the consortial Teagle grant focused on a direct and indirect assessment of student experience in capstone courses. As part of
the work, we identified programs with required or elective capstone experiences and evaluated student responses on the NSSE. Discussions with department chairs about the importance of being more intentional in identifying experiences in the major as culminating or capstone experiences led to changes in catalog copy and to an increase in the number of seniors who reported on the NSSE that they had taken a capstone (from 30% in 2005 to 41% in 2008). Currently, 49% of academic programs require a capstone experience, although the majority of the others have optional culminating experiences (see Appendix 1.12 for a summary of capstone experiences by program).

Trexler Library staff have been leaders in educating faculty and students about information literacy. We currently address information literacy skills development and assessment in a number of ways. The recently developed Trexler Library Statement on Information Literacy (http://www.muhlenberg.edu/library/about/informationliteracy.html) helps to guide current and future information literacy initiatives. As part of the curriculum review process, the faculty approved an information literacy goal area in the General Education Mission Statement and Goals (i.e., Muhlenberg graduates locate, analyze, evaluate, and share information using emerging and established technologies).

Trexler Library has worked to continue and expand its information literacy activities in support of the curriculum. Activities include: collaboration with faculty for in-class library instruction for courses at all levels, from First Year Seminars to advanced level courses; development of faculty/staff workshops on designing effective library assignments and teaching with technology; provision of virtual and in-person reference services, including individual research appointments; enhanced development of the library website for online research support; a combined Writing and Information Consultation Center to assist students through all stages of research; cultivation of the library's relationship with writing and academic peer tutors for referrals and collaboration; and an Information Commons offering high-end multimedia workstations designed to guide student research projects from conception to production and presentation.

As a joint initiative of the library, Writing Program, and the Office of the Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment, we administered the HEDS Research Practices Survey to assess first-year and senior-year students’ experiences with and perceptions of academic research, as well as to explore students’ development over time (see report in Appendix 1.4). The results have helped us to better understand students' information literacy proficiencies and attitudes. A follow-up focus group provided a deeper analysis of FY students’ high school writing and research experiences. We are now working to apply these results to practice, especially in collaborations between faculty and librarians. We scheduled discussions about the findings with department library liaisons, department chairs, and other campus stake-holders. The Library and the Faculty Center for Teaching also collaborated in organizing a program on integrating information literacy into courses, during which we shared the assessment findings.

Since 2007 an APC-authorized curriculum-revision task force (Task Force I) worked to evaluate the current curriculum, develop student learning goals for general education, and draft a proposal for new general education requirements. A review of assessment data (e.g., NSSE and HEDS survey results, Teagle project findings, benchmark data)
and multiple focus groups and discussions with faculty, students, and staff led to the approval of general education goals in December 2009 (see Appendix 1.11). The goals informed the working model that faculty broadly endorsed in a May 2010 vote. A second ad-hoc committee (Task Force II) worked during Summer and Fall 2010 to revise this model in order to bring to the faculty for vote in December 2010. The model included a required capstone experience in the major and charged programs with the responsibility of articulating the means by which students will develop and master information literacy and oral community skills in their programs (see Appendix 1.13). As noted earlier, the proposal did not pass in the December 2010 vote. However, efforts are underway to develop some of the curricular elements of the proposal such as 1) required capstone experiences in all programs, 2) an intentional focus on the development of oral communication skills, and 3) the integration of information literacy in the disciplines. The Provost is providing funds to support department work on these initiatives. We have submitted an application for a team to participate in the AAC&U Engaging Departments Institute in July 2011 with the goal of developing institutional goals for capstone experiences and mechanisms for assessing student learning (e.g., skills in oral communication, information literacy, writing, and integrative learning) in capstones. The Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment will provide support and coordination for the faculty’s work.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The Visiting Team noted that “thought might be given to whether some of this [community volunteer service performed by students] is course-related and should be credit-bearing.” The Self-Study, on the other hand, noted:

(1) because “individualized instruction experiences (practicums, internships, and independent study/research) are valuable for outside learning and application, as well as contributing significantly to the academic quality and intellectual climate on the college campus, resources should be provided to increase opportunities for more students to participate in these experiences;”

(2) “co-curricular programming needs to be strengthened with better coordination between offices, more dedication of physical space to some programs, and budget lines dedicated to support staff and faculty;” and

(3) “the College should identify and implement strategies to encourage more students, especially men, to study abroad and secure additional funding to support students from low-income families who wish to study abroad.”

The Self-Study indicated ongoing concern about “maintaining equivalence between the day college and the Wescoe School. Efforts must be made to coordinate methods of instructor evaluation, course expectations, and faculty oversight and to encourage a more active role for the Wescoe School Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee in developing policy and curriculum for the Wescoe School and in regularly evaluating current policy and curriculum. Closer connections between The Wescoe School and certain offices of the College, such as Development and Alumni Relations, should also be developed to make graduates of the Wescoe School feel more a part of the College and to develop loyalty to the College that might well benefit the College in the future.”
Service Learning. In 2005, a task force on Civic Engagement brought to the Academic Policy Committee a proposal to establish a Community Based Learning Certificate. The proposal was not approved, in large part because of concerns over student desire to accumulate multiple credentials. Service learning has increased significantly over the past three years, from 237 students in 14 courses (2007-08) to 365 students in 28 courses (2010-11) (http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/campuslife/community-service/service/courses.html). The Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement has collaborated with the Faculty Center for Teaching in writing a successful proposal for federal funds to support initiatives that increase and deepen service learning and community engagement across the campus. Programs including faculty-community learning communities, a Community Fellows venture, and summer internships.

Student Research. The College has made progress in the area of student research since the implementation of the Strategic Plan in 2004. A new category -- Collaborative summer grants for students to assist faculty in their research (Provost’s Grants)--numbered 11 in 2010. While the summer grants for student-initiated research (Dean’s Grants) has remained constant at seven, the numbers of applicants has ranged from 12 to 21. Both types of summer grants pay a $2600 stipend and include free campus housing. Twenty-eight students also received funds for short-term work with faculty on their research in 2009-10. According to the 2008 NSSE survey of Muhlenberg Seniors, 36% reported having worked on research with a professor. According to the 2003 HEDS Senior Survey, 32.6% of Muhlenberg students reported having participated in independent study or research by the end of their senior year; that figure was 38.2% in the 2010 HEDS Seniors Survey. Since the Self-Study, funds for student travel to present at conferences has increased from $4500 to $9000. Over the past four years, 125 students in a variety of disciplines have been funded at a minimum of $350 to present, exhibit, or perform in venues including the meetings of the Association of Psychological Science, the American Association of Teachers of French, the Eastern Economic Association, and the Society for Neuroscience. An additional 152 students have received funding for registration at local conferences such as the LVAIC (Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges) student conferences in Psychology and Women’s Studies.

Co-curricular Programming. Closer coordination among faculty, residential life, and the College Committee on Campus Life has led to the development of living learning experiences. Six such courses were taught over a three-year period (2004-2007) in an attractively renovated former fraternity house and included: Social Justice Policy; Philosophy East and West; Public Health Policy; Drugs Behavior and Society; Gender, Sexuality, and Religion; and Adolescent Psychology. Currently, Living Learning is connected to the annual Center of Ethics theme. The most recent theme was Science and Sensibility: Studying Nature as Human Endeavor.

Global Education (Study Abroad). The latest edition (2009) of the Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors publication states that the national average for the percentage of American males studying abroad has been stable at 35% for the past
10 years. In the past five years, the percentage of male participation in semester programs ranged from a low of 22% in 2005 to a high of 34% in 2009. In short-term, Muhlenberg faculty-led programs in January, males totaled 45% of the participants. All three programs were led by faculty from the Accounting Business and Economics (ABE) department, in which the majority of majors are males. Participants in the LVAIC summer language and culture program reflect the high percentage of females in language majors; only 24% of the participants are males.

During their semester off-campus, students retain all financial aid with the exception of work-study. While aid for short-term study is not the norm, students may find financial aid from other sources for summer study abroad. Increasingly, short-term study has been linked to a semester-long Muhlenberg course that culminates in a three-week stay, led by one or more faculty members, at sites including Turkey, Bangladesh, and China. Normal aid packages apply for such semesters. Financial aid numbers reveal the following increases: In the five-year period, the percentages of students who took Muhlenberg financial aid abroad with them ranged from 68% to 83%, with a 5-year average of 75%; the average amount of financial aid has increased every single year, from $6,718 in 2005 to $8,451.50 in 2009; in 2005, half the students who received financial aid received more than $6,000, with more than half receiving $8,250 today; and more than 10% of the students who study abroad with financial aid receive more than $12,000 per semester from the College.

The Wescoe School. Similar to the day school, Wescoe course evaluations are requested from students in every class. Evaluations are sent to the faculty member and the department chair of the offering department (for the accelerated degree program, evaluations are sent to the Director of Accelerated Programs). Most academic departments have contact with and/or observe adjunct faculty teaching. Moreover, several full-time faculty teach in the Wescoe school and some Wescoe faculty also teach in the day school.

The Wescoe School Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee (WSAPCC) meets monthly to review curricular changes, student petitions, special topics courses, and other business. In 2009, in conjunction with the Wescoe School staff, several members of the committee were involved in bringing a National Honor Society for Adult Learners, Alpha Sigma Lambda, to campus. WSAPCC also reviewed and approved two new evaluation rubrics for the Accelerated Degree program in 2009 (went into use Summer 2009). One rubric was to obtain feedback from community partners who work with students on their senior capstone project. The other was to provide feedback on the program outcomes as a whole from the faculty "readers/evaluators" who serve on a panel when the students present their "capstone" project. The Associate Dean of Institutional Assessment is working with the Wescoe school to aggregate the capstone rubric evaluations to provide assessment of the accelerated degree programs (see Appendix 1.14).

In 2009-10 members of the WSAPCC were involved in the 100th Anniversary of Adult Education Celebration at Muhlenberg including: a kick-off celebration, scholarly
presentation by a distinguished educator in continuing education, and a grand finale celebration for current students and alumni. The Development Office has worked with the 100th anniversary scholarship committee to raise funds for Wescoe student scholarships.

**Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

The Visiting Team report acknowledged the need for “direct measures of student learning outcomes” that sampled student work across the institution and not just in specific programs.

While a more extensive discussion of the types of direct tools we are using to evaluate student learning can be found in the Assessment section of this report (see page 47), four specific projects are summarized here. The Teagle Foundation consortium grant was a catalyst for laying a foundation for the direct assessment of student learning outcomes across the curriculum. The grant supported the development of rubrics to assess intentional learning across the curriculum, as well as to evaluate student experience in capstone courses and student-faculty research. As part of the grant project, thirty faculty from across the curriculum participated in scoring sessions where they evaluated student essays using the Teagle project intentional learning rubric. Three capstone course instructors from the Biology, English, and Psychology departments required students in their courses to complete a pre-post essay assignment designed to assess the outcomes of the capstone experience. Findings were shared with the Curriculum Task Force I and II, as well as the entire faculty, and informed the current curriculum revision which has a focus on curricular elements that will facilitate intentional and integrative learning. The final report can be found in Appendix 1.3.

In addition, Muhlenberg administered the HEDS Research Practices Survey in Spring 2009 to all first year students and seniors, a tool that taps both indirect and direct evidence of information literacy skills. This instrument assesses student perceptions of their research skills and their knowledge of research strategies and concepts. Results from this instrument were shared with groups across campus (e.g., library liaisons, department chairs, faculty development program) and will inform future efforts across the curriculum (see Appendix 1.4 for the Research Practices Survey report). In two other projects, measures of direct assessment of outcomes in service learning courses and of outcomes from brain-based pedagogy were developed by faculty in two current learning communities.
Chapter 2

Challenges and Opportunities for the next Five Years

During the 2009–2010 academic year, the President’s Planning Group (PPG), a group of administrators, faculty, staff and students, met regularly throughout the year to update the strategic plan for the College. The resulting document “Momentum: Muhlenberg’s Strategic Plan 2010–2015” was constructed, vetted by the campus community, and approved by the Board of Trustees at its October 2010 Board Meeting. The plan can be found at http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/strategicplanning/Momentum-Approved.pdf

As part of the document, the PPG compiled a list of the College’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats – a SWOT analysis. Strengths identified by the PPG include: a strong academic reputation, a strong sense of community extended to all members of the campus community, close student/faculty relationships, exceptional programs for first year students, and a vibrant academic support system for our students. Weaknesses included: limited financial resources, a lack of ethnic and international diversity, and an inconsistent presence of capstone experiences across majors. Challenges and opportunities facing Muhlenberg as described by the PPG are elaborated below.

Challenges

The challenges facing Muhlenberg over the next several years as identified by the PPG include: the weak economy, an increased need for financial aid, a changing student demographic, competition from less expensive alternatives to private college tuition, and increasing pressure on the small staffs of the Academic Resource Center and the Office of Disability Services to accommodate the growing number of special needs students.

As a tuition driven institution, the greatest threat Muhlenberg faces is the ability to achieve enrollment goals while controlling the discount rate which is 10% below the national average for private colleges (43.5%). Currently, our surplus enrollments have given us a cushion that has allowed us to maintain the lower rate; however, maintaining a 33.5% discount rate at a time when families are losing income through unemployment and underemployment will be especially challenging. Many families are seeking (and receiving) larger financial aid packages which increases the College’s discount rate. So far, because we have exceeded enrollment goals the College has been able to maintain appropriate levels of investment in areas including educational programming, building maintenance, and the flexibility to hire staff. In addition, alumni, parent, and corporate giving may be strained in the years ahead as both families and companies struggle to make payroll and pay their bills. Thus, these potential donors will find it harder to support worthy causes such as Muhlenberg. Finally, higher utility costs and health care premiums will continue to grow beyond the rate of inflation claiming an increased share of budget resources.
The economic downturn may have an additional impact on our students. Not only will they require greater financial aid, but they are sure to become more vocationally driven – seeking majors that will lead to job security and high wages. The students may be less concerned about the value of a liberal arts education and instead be focused on what career will enable them to achieve the lifestyle that they desire. One result may be less demand for traditional liberal arts majors like philosophy, art history, and religious studies in favor of business, accounting, and education. Trends in course enrollment and choice of major will be monitored closely to see if enrollment shifts occur.

The PPG noted that the college age population has started to decrease nationally and this is particularly true in the northeast where Muhlenberg draws most of its student body. As the student age population decreases, there will be tremendous competition for the very best students and increased competition for students of all types. Since most of the College’s operating budget is the result of student tuition, a drop in enrollment would create financial hardship for the College. The challenge for Muhlenberg (and for similar tuition-driven institutions) will be to maintain enrollment levels and academic quality while controlling the discount rate. So far, Muhlenberg has successfully balanced these three factors.

Another challenge listed in the strategic plan is price resistance. The cost of a Muhlenberg education may compel some prospective students to pursue and take advantage of less expensive options including state universities, community colleges, and online programs. Thus, over the next several years, Muhlenberg needs to contain costs in an effort to limit tuition increases. As a step in this direction, all departmental budgets have been reduced by 3% for 2010-2011 and a further 1.5% reduction is scheduled for 2011-2012. At the same time, the College needs to explore sources, other than tuition, for generating additional revenue.

Finally, over the last decade, Muhlenberg has earned a reputation as an institution that will work with students with a variety of disabilities and disorders to help them achieve a meaningful educational experience. As word of our success spreads, there has been growth in the number of students with special needs. Consequently, additional students will require even more resources to help them graduate on schedule.

**Opportunities**

In response to these challenges, the College has engaged in self-reflection, reaffirmed its core values, sharpened its focus, and moved forward. The PPG recognized several areas where the College could capitalize on opportunities for further success including: curricular reform, increased diversity, establishment of capstone experiences, and a greater emphasis on experiential learning.

The on-going review of the general education requirements is an example of an opportunity for the College to hone our image, refocus on core values, and justify the value of the education we provide to students. Curricular reform will allow the College to enhance its academic reputation and distinguish itself from our peer institutions.
Furthermore, as students and parents become more vocationally focused, they will demand evidence of the value and tangible outcomes of a liberal arts education. The College’s annual Career Survey of graduating seniors provides compelling evidence of strong post-graduation outcomes; however, we need to communicate our effectiveness in developing students’ skills in specific liberal education outcomes such as critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, research and discovery, analysis of information, making connections, and communication skills. Results from institutional assessment of student learning can be used to provide prospective students and parents with a clearer understanding of the outcomes of a Muhlenberg liberal arts education and show how this education will prepare students for successful careers of all types.

Given assessment results (e.g., NSSE, Teagle Project) that show a lack of academic challenge in the senior year, another area of improvement targeted by the Senior Year Experience Committee, the Curriculum Task Forces, and the PPG has been to provide capstone experiences for all Muhlenberg students. Currently, some programs have specially designed capstone courses while other programs have no capstone experience in place. Capstones provide students with opportunities to complete a significant culminating work that requires connections between various components of their education. Ensuring that all majors require capstone experiences will enhance the level of academic rigor for students and allow for greater mastery of central liberal arts skills.

The College has a strong tradition of providing students with experiential learning opportunities and has focused attention and resources on deepening this type of learning, particularly in the areas of student/faculty research and service learning. Both provide opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom, see real life examples, and contribute to society. The strategic plan emphasizes the value of these experiences by earmarking funds to expand both types of opportunities for Muhlenberg students. Recent external funding (e.g., a federal appropriation to support service learning) and evaluation (i.e., Carnegie Community Engagement Classification) provides the College valuable recognition of the effectiveness of the community-based learning experiences available for our students.

As the national population continues to become more diverse, the College will find ways to increase diversity on campus. As a start, the College has identified several high schools with significant populations of underrepresented groups and has done targeted recruitment. However, this initiative comes at a cost given that this population often requires greater financial aid. Consequently, the College needs to explore opportunities for outside funding to support this goal. We currently have two National Science Foundation (NSF) grants designed to attract underrepresented groups to the physical sciences. The first cohort of NSF students (students of color interested in majoring in the biological sciences) arrived on campus Fall 2009. The MP SIMS Scholar program admitted six academically talented and economically disadvantaged students in Fall 2010. All six finished their first semester with GPAs well above the minimum established in the grant (2.50), ranging from 3.0 to 4.0, and all are continuing in mathematical or physical sciences in their second semester.
Muhlenberg faces clear challenges in the next five years, particularly due to its tuition-driven status. However, the institution is poised to maintain its core strengths and its commitment to providing students a quality liberal education, while continually seeking to improve the educational experience for students. As a result, the College will continue to thrive and fulfill its mission in the years ahead.
Chapter 3

Enrollment and Finance Trends and Projections

Full-time, traditional day enrollments have grown from 2,147 in Fall 2005 to 2,225 in Fall 2010, an increase of 78 students (+3.6%). Muhlenberg's Strategic Plan does not call for enrollment growth moving forward. In fact, the College has been slightly over-enrolled in recent years, as the Strategic Plan targets a full-time, traditional day enrollment of 2,180.

The College attracted 4,217 applications for the class that entered in Fall 2005. Applications peaked at 4,846 for Fall 2008, then fell to 4,568 for Fall 2010—still above the 2005 number, but clearly impacted by the economic downturn of 2008-09. As of March 18, 2011, applications stood at 4,861 setting an all time record. Incoming first-year classes averaged 589 during the 2006 to 2010 period. Muhlenberg’s acceptance rate was 42.9% in 2005, 45.4% in 2009. Yield on offers of admission was 31.8% in 2005, 27.5% in 2010.

Religious diversity remains a hallmark of the Muhlenberg student body, with approximately one third Catholic, one third Jewish, and twenty percent Protestant students. Ethnic diversity has been more of a challenge, although we have made progress. In Fall 2005, the College enrolled 155 multicultural students in a total enrollment of 2,147 (7.2%). In Fall 2010, the number of multicultural students had grown to 192 of 2,225 (8.6%). It’s noteworthy that in 2010 there was an increase in the number of students (419) who chose not to report their race (18.83% of the student body) compare to only 8 students in 2009.

Moving forward, Muhlenberg will face the twin challenges of a declining 18-year-old population and a still-unsteady economy. The College experienced an uptick in applications (4,568), first-year students (604), multicultural diversity (11.9%), and academic quality (1231 combined Verbal/Math SAT mean; 47% top tenth) in the first-year class that entered in Fall 2010, while controlling its tuition discount rate at 33.5%. The College Source Book (beginning on page 59 http://www.muhlenberg.edu/pdf/main/aboutus/ir/source_book/SourceBook1011.pdf) provides more detailed information on the incoming class admissions profiles and enrollment patterns for the past five years.

The two tables below show the enrollment trends for the current year and past three years, as well as the enrollment projections for the next four academic years. Our budget model assumes no changes in the total enrollment or in the number of students studying abroad.
Student Enrollments: Day, Wescoe, LVAIC and Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Day Enrollment</th>
<th>Wescoe Enrollment</th>
<th>LVAIC Enrollment*</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2,225</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>2,230</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>2,212</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>2,174</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2,456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Actual enrollments are as of the fall census data for the academic year stated. *Students are registered through the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) consortium agreement.

Student Enrollments: Budgetary Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Full Time Day Enrollments</th>
<th>Students Studying off Campus</th>
<th>Total On Campus Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operating Budget

The operating budget has grown annually, on average, 5.8% from fiscal year 2006-2007 to 2010-2011. Individual year operating budgets are shown in figure 1.1. Much of this growth has been fueled by annual student charge increases and an increase in the support provided by the endowment fund. In each of these years a balanced budget was achieved. In fact, a balanced budget has been maintained for fifty-four consecutive years. Conservative budgeting procedures and a system to monitor approved budgets has assisted greatly in this streak. This has contributed to the growth in Unrestricted Net Assets from $166 million at the end of FY06 to $196 million at the end of FY10, an 18.1% increase. Declines in the overall financial markets have caused a lower percentage growth rate increase than in prior years.
As shown in figure 1.2, the revenue budget relies heavily on student charges (Tuition/Fees plus Room and Board, which is a portion of Auxiliary Enterprises). For FY11, student charges account for 85.6% of the revenue budget. This is an increase over FY06, when student charges comprised 84.9% of the revenue budget. Due to the effect volatility of enrollment can have on the financial health of the institution, the conservative budget practices mentioned above are a must.

Changes in the expense budget from FY06 to FY11 show a trend of financial aid becoming an increasingly larger part of total expenses. As a percent of budget, financial aid has increased from 21.2% to 22.8%. Operating Budgets decreased from 22.7% to 21.0%. Salaries and benefits, as a percent of budget, have also decreased going from 43.5% to 43.1%.
Endowment

From 2004 to 2010 the endowment fund has grown from $88.3 million to $126.5 million, an average annual increase of 6.2%. Figure 1.3 displays annual fiscal year-end endowment balances during this time period. Growing the endowment is considered a key factor to the College’s future success. One of the reasons for borrowing funds for most of the capital needs in the previous strategic plan was to allow the Development Office to concentrate on raising funds for endowment. When possible, year-end operating surpluses are transferred to the quasi-endowment fund along with unrestricted bequests. At the end of FY09 and FY10, $5.2 million and $3.2 million was transferred, respectively.
An endowment investment policy created, and periodically updated, by the Finance & Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees with assistance from an outside consultant, guides asset allocation, rebalancing, and benchmarking decisions. Current policy calls for 16% of the portfolio to be invested in domestic equities, 22% in international equities, 22% in fixed income investments, 15% in hedge funds, 13% in real assets, and 12% in private equity. Up to half of the domestic equity allocation is to be invested passively through index funds. Also within this allocation is diversification between large and small cap equities and between growth and value sectors.

In October 2007 the endowment fund hit a high point of $141 million. Like many other institutions, we have experienced significant volatility since that time. The fund went below $100 million in February 2009 with a value of $96.5 million. Fortunately, the fund has bounced back to $126.5 million at June 30, 2010 and sits at $140 million as of January, 31, 2011.

**Net Assets**

As noted earlier, Unrestricted Net Assets have grown 18.1% since June 30, 2006, which represents an annual growth rate of 4.3%. As can be seen in Figure 1.4a, Unrestricted Net Assets have returned to the June 30, 2007 level after two down years. Figure 1.4b breaks out Unrestricted Net Assets and shows that investment value declines in the endowment fund since June 30, 2007 have negatively affected this balance and growth rate.

Total Net Assets have fared worse with an annual growth rate of 3.0%. Once again, declines in endowment investment values have kept growth rates down.
Net Assets

Figure 1.4a

MUHLENBERG COLLEGE

NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Assets by Type</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating</td>
<td>$228,649</td>
<td>$228,649</td>
<td>$228,649</td>
<td>$228,649</td>
<td>$228,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment/Designated</td>
<td>94,730,857</td>
<td>104,244,495</td>
<td>105,778,544</td>
<td>83,999,639</td>
<td>74,926,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in Plant</td>
<td>85,500,552</td>
<td>86,674,511</td>
<td>88,905,590</td>
<td>82,212,677</td>
<td>79,992,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$180,460,058</td>
<td>$191,147,655</td>
<td>$194,912,783</td>
<td>$166,440,965</td>
<td>$155,147,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Restricted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment Income</td>
<td>18,800,584</td>
<td>33,148,934</td>
<td>36,216,260</td>
<td>29,592,356</td>
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<td>Other Purposes</td>
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<td>7,804,199</td>
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<td>$35,216,636</td>
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<td>Pledges</td>
<td>$56,135,183</td>
<td>$56,106,756</td>
<td>$47,922,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Net Assets</td>
<td>$271,811,877</td>
<td>$294,655,802</td>
<td>$292,162,436</td>
<td>$261,482,472</td>
<td>$237,233,211</td>
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Debt and Debt Service

Standard & Poor’s has assigned a credit rating of A+ to the College’s outstanding bond issues. Moody’s Investor Services maintains a rating of A2 for the College’s debt. In June 2005 the College issued a $48,400,000 bond issue of which approximately $29 million were funds received beyond refinancing. These funds were used for construction of the new science building, renovation of Shankweiler Biology Building,
phase I addition to Seegers Union, and The Village (student housing). An additional $8,000,000 was borrowed in 2007 to enlarge the Village project. Finally, in 2009, $20,000,000 was borrowed for phase 2 of the Seegers Union project, renovation of an old fraternity house into a rehearsal house for Theater and Dance Departments, and construction/renovation to expand the Hillel House and relocate the Sociology and Anthropology Department.

When the auction rate market was experiencing great volatility in early 2008 the College issued new debt to retire the first two bond issues noted above. A recent review of our debt capacity and the level of debt service our operating budget can handle have led to the conclusion that we will not be borrowing any funds during this next phase of the strategic plan. The last debt issue was wrapped around existing debt service requirements providing a fairly level amount of debt service on an annual basis.

Benchmark Comparisons

One of the key financial benchmark analyses performed was measuring endowment values. The small size of Muhlenberg College’s endowment puts us at a competitive disadvantage. Figure 1.5 shows the endowment fund third from the bottom among the thirteen benchmark schools. In fact, the average of these schools ($308,753,000) is approximately two and a half times the size of Muhlenberg’s endowment fund ($126,482,000). All figures are as of June 30 or May 31, 2010.

Endowment value per student full time equivalent (FTE) does not look much better. We are ahead of one school, Ithaca, in this comparison. In relation to the average of the thirteen schools ($96,329), we are less than half ($44,395).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE 1.5</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENDOWMENT COMPARISONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JUNE 30TH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LEHIGH</td>
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<td>LAFAYETTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>DICKINSON</td>
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<tr>
<td>SKIDMORE (May 31)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRANKLIN &amp; MARSHALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GETTYSBURG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITHACA (May 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEATON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUHLENBERG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSQUEHANNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSINUS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning and Budgeting

Planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal has not changed since the last Middle States visit in 2006. The link between planning and budgeting is outlined on page 10 in response to standard 2. A multi-year budget model with a number of assumptions is used in the planning process to match budget funds with strategic initiatives. This budget model is the same model used in the first strategic plan and this time it anticipates a steady enrollment. The revenue budget is built on projected enrollment less fifty students. Since the College is so dependent on student charges the budget is built conservatively to cushion for enrollment dips or sudden increases in financial aid. Endowment value fluctuations do not have as great an impact since the endowment draw only makes up 5.6% of the total operating budget.

Resource Allocation

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) is responsible for providing recommended macro budget increases such as student charges and salary pools. This committee consists of a diverse group of faculty and staff from various areas of the College. Three Senior Staff members serve along with a faculty member from each of the three academic divisions and two other staff members. Up until the FY06 budget, the BAC examined the current budget and reviewed anticipated needs for the following budget year. Material covering student charges at benchmark institutions, how faculty salary averages were rated by AAUP, financial aid data, and recent economic statistics is prepared by the Treasurer’s Office and distributed to BAC committee members. The Admissions, Financial Aid, Development, and Adult Education Program areas make presentations to BAC. From this background, BAC made recommendations to the President.

For FY06, and each fiscal year subsequently, BAC has used the budget model prepared by PPG as their base. Similar material was reviewed as previously and presentations continued to be made. BAC discussed macro assumptions under this budget model and made recommended changes to the President. Currently, four of the eight BAC members are also members of PPG. This aided the conversations and kept the committee’s eye on the strategic plan.

The next step is for the President, with the Chief Business Officer and Treasurer, to put together a budget to propose to the Finance & Investment Committee of the Board. This committee can choose to accept the budget and send it on the Board of Trustees or send it back to the President and Treasurer for revision. The Trustees cannot and do not make “line item vetoes” in the budget, although they can certainly question spending patterns within the budget and make broad policy recommendations.

Once a macro budget has been approved, individual department budget building material is distributed to department heads. They have approximately one month to complete their request and deliver it to the appropriate Senior Staff member. Senior Staff are asked to complete a first review before passing these budget requests on to
the Treasurer. From the requests, the Treasurer prepares a summary by areas of the College and by each Senior Staff member. This summary serves as the discussion piece for conversations among the President, Treasurer, and individual Senior Staff member. A final detailed budget results from these meetings. For the FY10 budget and now for the FY11 budget this is considered a tentative budget until mid-May when the size and financial aid of the incoming class is known.

Having a strategic plan in place aids departments in their discussions and budget request preparations by having agreed upon priorities for the College. The strategic planning documents provide additional guidance for departments (the institutional mission statement, fundamental institutional values, and strategic planning principles and goals can be found at http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/strategicplanning/Planning%20Documents.pdf). Budget requests are reviewed by the President in light of how the request aligns with the strategic plan. However, some requests are more operational in nature instead of strategic. Careful reviews are made to assure that needed operational dollars are not ignored.
Building on the strong foundation outlined in our 2006 Self-Study and echoed in the Visiting Team report, Muhlenberg has continued to broaden and deepen efforts to assess institutional effectiveness and student learning across the College. With a dedicated administrative structure (e.g., Associate Dean of Institutional Assessment and Director of Institutional Research) to provide support for and coordination of assessment activities, academic and administrative departments have developed mission statements and goals for their programs and have taken ownership of assessing these objectives. The College has a strong culture of using assessment evidence to inform program and institutional decision-making. Moreover, participation in a Teagle Foundation Collaborative grant provided faculty members valuable training and experience in developing tools to directly assess student work.

As noted in our 2006 Self-Study, assessment plays a central role in the strategic planning process and is integrated into the process in several ways. The President’s Senior Staff conducted annual reviews and updates on the progress of the 2004 Strategic Plan. These reports were shared with the community on the President’s website (http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/stratplanning/update.pdf). Moreover, a central principle of Strategic Planning at Muhlenberg is that the process is driven by internal and external data. Institutional and student outcome results played a significant role in the development of initiatives in the current 2010 plan (http://www.muhlenberg.edu/committees/strategicplanning/Momentum-Approved.pdf). Current initiatives that were informed by assessment results include: 1) the development of an Academic Technology Structure, 2) the formalization of information literacy integration, 3) the strengthening of student research opportunities, 4) the expansion of wireless coverage, 5) involvement in the Consortium for Faculty Diversity, and 5) the establishment of Intergroup Diversity Dialogues.

Since 2004, when the Trustees created the Board of Observers and initiated a system of external review, all academic and administrative departments have completed a comprehensive self-study culminating in an external review by a visiting committee composed of members selected from the College’s Board of Observers and experts selected in consultation with the department (see Appendix 4.1 for schedule of department reviews). These reviews have provided the opportunity for departments to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, to provide evidence of their effectiveness, and to reflect on future goals and initiatives. In general, departments have found the time-intensive process a productive examination of their work and have been pleased with the assessment and recommendations from visiting teams. Recommendations from these reports are continually reviewed to evaluate progress. (Appendix 4.2 provides a summary of recommendations and responses from academic department reviews.) We also assess the external review process and have clarified guidelines for self-study materials and for team reports in response to suggestions by departments and team members (see Appendix 4.3 for guidelines).
External reviews of academic departments have led to increased expectations for evidence of program assessment. To support these expectations, the Office of Institutional Assessment has organized workshops, provided resources, and consulted with department chairs and faculty. All academic departments have articulated mission statements and student learning goals for their programs and have conducted some type of indirect assessment (e.g., senior and/or alumni surveys, focus groups, interviews) of their students. Several programs have integrated direct assessments into capstone or required major courses and many more are in the process of developing embedded assessments and rubrics to evaluate student work. Results have been discussed at department meetings and, in some cases, have led to curricular and pedagogical revisions (Appendix 4.4 provides a summary of academic department assessment activities). Moreover, having a central repository for this work in the Institutional Assessment Office has created a culture of assessment where departments routinely share their work (e.g., surveys, embedded assessments, rubrics, reports) with one another to serve as models and to increase interdisciplinary communication on assessment practices at the College. The institution of annual Department Assessment Reports (examples can be found in Appendix 4.5) in 2009-2010 has served to further increase communication among departments and regularize program assessment as an integral aspect of department work and planning.

At the administrative level, departments complete annual assessments of goals. Several offices and programs have increased the integration of assessment over the past five years and most offices under the Dean of the College for Academic Life (DOCAL) and the Dean of Student Affairs have completed a department assessment plan (see Appendix 4.6 for a summary of administrative department activities). Programs and offices under the DOCAL conduct numerous assessments to evaluate effectiveness and student and/or parent satisfaction. Both students and parents complete surveys to evaluate the overall experience at June Advising, as well as specific aspects of the program. We assess First Year students’ and faculty advisors’ perceptions of Orientation. Results from these evaluations have informed revisions to both these programs. The Academic Resource Center conducts extensive evaluations of the Learning Assistants program, surveying students and professors, as well as assessments of peer tutors and one-on-one consultations with the learning specialists. They also track graduation rates and postgraduate experiences of students with disabilities. Disabilities Services developed instruments to evaluate the experiences of students taking accommodated tests in their office. In addition, the Career Center documents student attendance at programs and assesses satisfaction with individual counselor sessions (examples of administrative department assessment reports can be found in Appendix 4.7).

A full-day workshop on program assessment with all offices in the Student Affairs division led to the development of a mission statement, program goals, and student learning objectives (see Appendix 4.8). Since then, each office has worked to align programs and services with these goals and to conduct assessments to evaluate effectiveness and student development. Residence Life administered the EBI Residential Life Assessment to evaluate student perceptions of facilities and residence hall programming (Report can be found in Appendix 1.9). The Office of Student Leadership Programs requires each fraternity and sorority to provide evidence that they have met college expectations in five areas of
performance. The office also evaluates student advisor perceptions of the First Year orientation programming, as well as their own training for the advisor position. Currently, this office is collaborating with the Office of Residential Life to evaluate the effect of strength-based training and programming on first year students’ transition to college. The Office of Community Service and Community Engagement (OCSCE) conducts extensive assessments of its programs, evaluating perspectives of students, faculty, and community members. Students involved in service learning complete pre and post surveys to identify their understanding of the experience and track the extent that service learning increased understanding of course material and civic engagement. OCSCE contacts community partners and faculty during and after the semester to insure that agency and curricular goals are aligned and fulfilled. The office tracks the extent of student work (both course-related and co-curricular), documenting the agency, number of hours, and specific project. The successful Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application summarized community engagement across the institution and outlined the breadth and depth of assessment done to evaluate Muhlenberg’s commitment to community work (see http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/newsevents/press/27_010511.html).

Admissions has traditionally been a campus leader in collecting and using data to inform decisions and practices. The office has used results from the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ) and other benchmarking to evaluate practices and admissions outcomes. Evaluations of the SAT Optional policy are done in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Assessment (see Appendix 4.9 for a presentation of the results). Results from an earlier assessment led to a clarification of the type of writing assignment required if students opt for this type of application. Given the importance of the campus tour for prospective students and their families, tour guide evaluations were instituted with annual reports of aggregate findings (a sample report can be found in Appendix 4.10). Results have led to changes in tour guide training.

The Office of Global Education uses student surveys and interviews to evaluate study abroad experiences and the quality of affiliated programs. All students complete an online survey upon their return to campus to assess perceptions of their experience and learning outcomes. In addition the Associate Dean interviews each student to discuss their experiences with housing, academics, and any other aspect of the study-abroad program pertinent to the student’s academic and personal goals. Student responses about each program are collected in a notebook made available to students who are interested in future study-abroad experiences. These responses are shared with the program provider and inform revisions to the program and/or a decision to drop our affiliation with the program.

While most of the nonteaching units that directly serve students (e.g., DOCAL offices, Student Affairs, Office of Global Education) have collected assessment data in a systematic manner that informs department goals and work, other administrative departments (e.g., Development, Human Resources) are just beginning to develop comprehensive assessment plans that articulate the collection and coordination of assessment efforts. The Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment has begun to support this work (e.g., meetings with Development staff) and will share resources on assessment
Indirect Assessment of Student Learning

At the institutional level, Muhlenberg administers a variety of standardized instruments to evaluate student perceptions of their educational experience, as well as specific programs and services. These tools are administered on a publicized cycle proposed by the Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment and the Director of Institutional Research (http://www.muhlenberg.edu/pdf/main/aboutus/ir/schedule.pdf) that allows for cross-sectional and peer comparisons. We survey our seniors every year using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the HEDS Senior Survey, or the HERI Senior Survey. In addition, annual surveys are given to first year students to evaluate previous educational experiences and expectations about their college education and student life (e.g., CIRP, BSSE), to assess perceptions of the first year experience at Muhlenberg (e.g., NSSE, AICUP First Year Student Survey), and to evaluate first year and senior information literacy skills (HEDS Research Practices Survey). Results from these instruments are presented to relevant administrative and faculty groups and have informed strategic planning, curricular review and development, academic support, and admission practices (see Appendix 4.11 for examples of reports and presentations).

In the past five years, with a coordinated focus and institutional structure (Office of Institutional Assessment) for student learning assessment, the College has made significant progress in developing tools and methods to assess student learning and to align findings with curricular and co-curricular revision. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the recent general education review. The Task Force on Curricular Design (Task Force I) conducted focus groups with faculty, administrators, and students, faculty surveys, and a curriculum retreat. They reviewed survey results (e.g., NSSE, HEDS Senior Survey), transcript analyses, findings from the Teagle Assessment Project, data showing current department offerings, and benchmark information on general education programs at peer institutions. The general education goals passed by the faculty in December 2009 and the proposed general education curriculum were solidly grounded in findings from these assessments. In response to the negative vote on the proposal, assessment efforts will be directed at evaluating alignment between the curricular goals and the current requirements. Faculty and administrative stakeholders will be involved in this work.

We have also conducted indirect assessments of specific curricular or co-curricular programs (e.g., FY Seminar program, Center for Ethics, Academic Behavior Code). Results from student and instructor surveys revealed a great deal of alignment in perceptions of the stated objectives of first year seminars and the extent that the course improved student skills (see Appendix 4.12). Similarly, faculty and student assessments of Center for Ethics programming indicated that students in courses that integrated these lectures and other activities into coursework developed a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the concepts. More recently, faculty members of the Academic Judicial Board conducted focus groups and surveys with students and faculty and reviewed results from the HEDS Senior Survey to evaluate understanding of the Academic Behavior Code and adherence to
college policy on academic integrity. They shared their findings with the campus community and worked with the Dean of the College for Academic Life to recommend changes to the Code, including renaming it the Academic Integrity Code, and to implement training for faculty and students.

**Direct Assessment of Student Learning**

The three year Teagle Foundation Value-Added Assessment Project in collaboration with four peer institutions focused on the indirect and direct assessment of student learning in programs with intensive faculty-student interaction. At Muhlenberg, we examined student learning in capstone courses and in student-faculty research experiences. The project involved the collection and analysis of student essays using rubrics developed by the Muhlenberg team and the five college collaborative team. We also analyzed NSSE data testing for differences in items that tapped intentional and integrative learning between student groups (Capstone vs. No Capstone and Research vs. No Research) and conducted focus groups and interviews that provided rich information on factors that influence student course selection and participation in high impact educational experiences. Updates on the project and the final report were shared with faculty and administrators and informed the curriculum review and strategic planning (see Appendix 1.3 for the final report).

As part of Muhlenberg’s participation in the AAC&U Bringing Theory to Practice Leadership Coalition, twelve faculty members participated in a learning community to deepen their understanding of the application of neuroscience and cognitive psychology to classroom pedagogy. The participants developed a common assessment tool to evaluate student learning in their courses as a result of course revision and assessed student work across courses (the report can be found in Appendix 4.13).

Two projects, the Mellon Sports Project and a comprehensive retention study (involving tracking of student data and an exit survey) (see Appendix 1.6) allow us to track learning of two subgroups of students, athletes and students who leave the college without graduating. Participation in the Mellon Sports Project has led to closer communication between the Admissions and Athletics Offices. The retention study indicated that students who choose to leave the College did not differ on important characteristics (e.g., GPA, major, gender) from the student body profile. Interest in attending larger or more urban schools or in majors not offered at the College (e.g., Nutrition, BFA in Dance) were the primary motivators influencing student decisions to transfer to another school.

The past five years has seen the establishment of a strong foundation for institutional and student learning assessment at Muhlenberg. With a dedicated administrative structure and practices to support departments and programs, assessment work has been integrated within and across the College. Faculty and administrators have developed an understanding and expertise of assessment practices and use evidence to inform new initiatives and revise current programs and services. While work still needs to be done to develop a plan for systematic assessment of the general education curriculum and to incorporate assessment activities into all administrative departments, the College has
created a culture of assessment and put in place the structures and resources to support and sustain the work.
## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABE</td>
<td>Accounting, Business, and Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Academic Policy Committee</td>
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<td>ASQ</td>
<td>Admitted Students Questionnaire</td>
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<td>BAC</td>
<td>Budget Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>CCIT</td>
<td>College Committee on Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSCF</td>
<td>Center for the Study of the College Fraternity</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOCAL</td>
<td>Dean of the College for Academic Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBI</td>
<td>Educational Benchmarking Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELCA</td>
<td>Evangelical Lutheran Church of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPPC</td>
<td>The Faculty Personnel and Policies Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full time equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIE</td>
<td>Institute of International Education</td>
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<td>LVAIC</td>
<td>Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP SIMS Scholar program</td>
<td>Mathematical and Physical Sciences Scholars in Math and Sciences</td>
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<td>OCSCE</td>
<td>Office of Community Service and Community Engagement</td>
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<td>PPAC</td>
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<td>President’s Planning Group</td>
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<td>Residential Advisor</td>
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<td>TKE</td>
<td>Tau Kappa Epsilon</td>
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<td>Wescoe School Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee</td>
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